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“Amid the din and roar of that fearful battle, his lusty voice rose up like thunder.”—Chapter 12

Young Folks' Colonial Library

THE STORY OF GENERAL JOHANN DEKALB

BY
PERCY K. FITZHUGH
ILLUSTRATED BY B. M. FAIRBANK



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colonies which, at that time, had spread themselves along the American shore, for the good housewife, Margaret, was busily engaged in cleaning her house and setting things to rights, which is the time-honored custom of housewives in that spotless land. Exactly what the stalwart Hans did with himself as the days went by, I cannot say, but we may be certain of, at least, two things,—that he was very much down-trodden and oppressed by Royalty and Nobility, and that he smoked a long pipe.

You would not suppose that such unimportant people as these would be so bold as to have a famous son, but that is exactly what they did, and nobody in Germany has been able to explain it or understand it to this very day. In those days it was supposed that in order to be a great soldier, it would be necessary to begin away back with one's great grandfathers and so enter the ranks with two or three hundred years' training stored up.

However this may be, on the 29th of June in the year 1721, a child was born to this homely pair, and they named him John. In the year 1780 fifty-nine years later, the famous Baron deKalb, loaded with glory and honor, laid down his life in the service of the Continental Army of America, and the word went abroad that the great soldier and the little peasant child were one and the same.

When little John was old enough his parents sent him to school at Kriegenbroun, but there is no account of any remarkable feat of learning performed by him while he was there. He may have been very stupid in his studies like some other children who have grown up to win renown. When he left school, he sallied forth into the great world, trudging along with his peasant's blouse and wooden shoes, to earn his living in any way that offered. He soon became a butler, and for six years history has nothing to tell us of his career. We may suppose, however, that he was

very busy in his humble profession, for the German gentlemen of that time spent most of their leisure in eating meals, and it must have required practically all of young John's time to get them ready and clear them away.

In the year 1743, our young friend appears again with his front name changed from John to Jean, and with an aristocratic "de" in front of his last name. He has, in some way, become a lieutenant in a German regiment of infantry in the service of France. And how he has grown! He is six feet high, with great broad shoulders, and searching eyes, and a splendid forehead, and a brave and haughty air. He looks as if he had been born to be great. He might have had a title several inches long and carried it with a noble air, so proud and handsome was he. How did his name get to be "deKalb"? And how did he attain to his position? We do not know. Surely, we are leaving the little thatched roof cottage,

with old Hans smoking his pipe and Margaret scrubbing and scrubbing, far in the distance.

Let us follow the ambitious young soldier on his rapid career, without tarrying in old Hütten-dorf, for there is much to record between the birth of the obscure peasant boy and his glorious end, years and years later in a distant land.

At about this time—the time when young deKalb appears as a lieutenant in the service of France, George Washington was still going to school in Virginia, and the American colonies were behaving very obediently toward the mother country. But the whole of Europe was engaged in a fearful conflict, known as the Seven Years' War, which the wicked Frederick the Great had started. It was in this war that young deKalb received his training as a soldier, and fought against England, and a few other countries, that were arrayed against Prussia and France and their friends. In 1747, he was made a captain and adjutant, an office of great responsibility, but with

all his military duties, he found time to study and familiarize himself with foreign languages and mathematics.

Of course, we cannot follow the history of the Seven Years' War, which was a very complicated affair indeed, nor can we record the deeds of our hero during that bloody and needless conflict, for he was only a minor officer, and was kept down by his proud and aristocratic superiors. It seems scarcely possible that one little man, like Frederick the Great, could have caused such an endless amount of trouble in the world, but it is an illustration of how many bad things a man can do and how much misery and bloodshed he can cause, if he sets about it with all his heart. The Seven Years' War was like a contagious fever which afflicted all the nations of Europe before it was gotten under control. Among other things, England took all the French colonies in America, and the upshot of the whole war was to leave England very proud and France very humiliated, and the

thirteen colonies very much poorer and sadder, and Frederick the Great not much better off than he had been before.

During the Seven Years' War, Baron deKalb fought bravely in the interest of France, and acquired a very decided hatred for Great Britain. He took part in some very important sieges and battles with long German names, and became a favorite with one or two of the French officers under whom he fought. When peace came in 1763 he had risen to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. But now the war was over and what was he to do? Frederick the Great had gone home to his luxuriant castle to write poems and play the flute, for if he could not make people miserable in one way he was sure to do it in another. England had appropriated the whole of Canada, and dusted the French from America and was happy—for the time being. The French officers held their permanent positions in the army, but what was to become of the young adventurer whom they had

made good use of when they needed him, but whom they did not need now? In those days a period of peace was about as disastrous as a business panic in our own time, and things looked exceedingly black for the young soldier, for all the nations were at peace with each other,—a very unusual and remarkable occurrence. He would fight for Germany or France, for any nation except England; but there was no fighting to be done. Europe was taking a rest, and our young hero was stranded in Paris without money, without employment, and without prospects. It was beginning to look very much as if he would have to become a butler again when something occurred which we must not overlook, for it had a very important bearing on his success and character.

It happened about this time that there lived in Paris a wealthy Hollander with his good wife, and a fair and accomplished daughter in a Holland cap. I suppose you know just what is going to happen, and of course, you are right. The

young soldier visited Paris, and became acquainted with the Dutch family in their beautiful residence at Courbevoye near the gay city, where he deliberately fell in love with the young lady, and they were betrothed during the first winter which followed the terrible Seven Years' War, and married in the spring when the wild flowers were opening their delicate faces on the bloody battle fields where King Frederick had caused so many deaths.

The young couple were very happy. Perhaps, as they sat together at their fireside, or wandered through the streets of the great French capital, the young soldier confided to his bride, the secret of how he got the "de" to put in front of his name, but if he did, she has never told it to the world. Just before they were married, a pension was given to the young Baron for his services in the French army, and now money and attention began to flow in upon him from every direction. His fair young Holland wife was very fond of

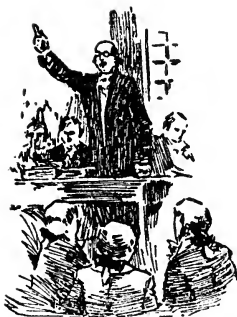
him especially when he wore his uniform and tinselled epaulettes, for she was very much like young ladies in our time.

It would be pleasant to linger with the young adventurer in his beautiful suburban home; to walk with him in his spacious gardens among the cultivated friends who gathered about him as the days went by, and I am not so sure that it would not be quite as agreeable as following his fortunes in the Seven Years' War, if they were known to us, and reviewing that awful drama which filled the continent with widows and orphans, and caused such sorrow during those cruel and bitter years. But we must hasten to consider the events which are shaping themselves abroad and leave our young hero to enjoy his happiness while he may, for it will not last long.



CHAPTER II.

THE SMILE OF FRANCE.



WE have now had a glimpse of the German peasant who joined the Army of France, which wanted to punish England, which was helping Prussia, in her war against Russia, Austria,

Sweden and Saxony; and we have seen him come safely out of all this to marry a Dutch bride near Paris. All is peace at last except that France and England are not on speaking terms. When things had been going along in this way for a few years, the nations of Europe began to notice that Great Britain was having a good deal of trouble

with her unruly American colonies. There was a rumor abroad that the mother country was acting like a *stepmother* and that the thirteen colonies were seriously contemplating the advisability of leaving home altogether. And the worst of it all,—or rather, I should say, the *best* of it all—was that the rumor, unlike many rumors, had a good deal of truth in it. England had been oppressing her American subjects in many ways, and a wave of indignation had swept over the thirteen colonies which threatened to carry everything before it, and shatter to pieces all political ties. Great and wise men had risen up among the people in Massachusetts and Virginia, and had uttered words which had a very rebellious sound in London. It was one thing for England to pass acts and laws and another thing to apply and enforce them. The people who had landed on the bleak, rocky shores of New England, and reared their little homes and churches in the wilderness, had somehow come to feel the



He soon had occasion to open his eyes very wide at the amazing combination of things which he saw.—Page 26.

spirit of liberty and to appreciate the splendid truth that even common people have some rights. They believed that they could attend to their own needs and keep house without any royal assistance, and they did not purpose that the fruits of their labor and industry should be sent abroad to furnish idle pleasures for a tyrannical king. Of course, the spectacle of a few colonies setting themselves up in this way was a great novelty to the nations of Europe, particularly to the kings and nobles. They had never heard of such a thing before, and the whole affair seemed preposterous.

But there was one nation which was having a quiet laugh at the state of affairs and that was France. Ever since the treaty which had closed the recent war, and by which she had had to sacrifice her American possessions to England, she had hung her head in defeat and humiliation. She had been vanquished in America, and fearfully beaten in Europe, and her proud and chivalrous spirit had bowed down in silent shame. Her

ships had been driven from the seas, her fine army demoralized, her glorious war record broken and scattered to the winds.

Suddenly she had looked up and beheld the proud victor herself in trouble. England, the mighty power, unable to manage her own family! Her very colonies shaking their fists across the broad Atlantic and defying her and calling her king a tyrant and a despot.

Then it was that France forgot her losses and her troubles, and began to smile. If you know anything about a French smile, you will realize how annoying this must have been to England. The smile was polite and genial and aggravating. Not a thing did France do but simply smile. The French ministry in particular smiled. The Duke of Choiseul smiled broadly and said nothing.

And time went on.

CHAPTER III.

THE SECRET MISSION.



IT is a singular fact that the more inquiries France made about the American colonies, the more curious she became. Her Minister of State, the Duke of Choiseul, was especially inquisitive. Any news in connection with England's attitude toward her colonial subjects was a topic of great interest to him, and his ears were open to all the continental gossip which was going the rounds of Europe. As a rule, it is a very risky and unwise thing to interfere in family quarrels, but as everybody knows, the French are so delicate and

artistic in everything they do that their interest in the subject was not suspected outside their own political circles.

During all this time, our young hero was living quietly at home, forming many valuable and influential friendships, and acquiring a reputation for honesty and good sense.

Finally, the French minister decided to push his investigations into American affairs still further with a view to ascertaining definitely exactly how much dissatisfaction existed in the colonies; whether they were strong enough to resist Great Britain, and whether they cared to do so. For he desired to whisper tempting encouragement in their ears if he could feel confident that his offers would be well received.

Now, it happened that in those days, Holland was a great commercial center, her streets filled with busy, prosperous merchants, and her many wharves lined with trading vessels which plied between the Dutch coast and the American col-

onies. Many a tale of colonial oppression and colonial anger and dissatisfaction was whispered about among the wealthy buyers of Amsterdam, and many a Dutch skipper seated comfortably on his ale keg in some public house, puffed away the thick smoke that enveloped him from public view, and confided to his spell bound brethren, fearful stories of the wicked and rebellious sentiments which he had heard openly expressed in good old Boston; and narrated many treasonable and disloyal acts which he had actually seen performed in Philadelphia, and even in Dutch New York.

Of course, the ears of the Duke of Choiseul burned to hear these thrilling tales which he knew must be true and not imaginary, for he was perfectly well aware that the Dutch had no imaginations, and could not invent such things to save their lives. So he concluded to send a confidential agent into Holland to mingle among the traders and sea-faring men there, and acquire information about American conditions and

affairs. For this delicate and difficult mission some one was needed who would not only be at ease with "low Dutch", but with high society as well, and altogether, the French Minister decided that our young friend, the Baron deKalb was best fitted for the task. So an offer was made him, which he promptly accepted, and set off with full instructions and all necessary expenses to the land of pipes and wooden shoes. There he visited the seaport towns, mingled with merchants and sailors, frequented their haunts, listened to their gossip and opinions, and became a great favorite wherever he was known. Among others he met a German, with whom he became great friends. This man had spent fifteen years in the colonies, and recounted some very startling tales. He told the young baron that the colonists were actually raising and drilling regiments and collecting military stores and that the British troops in America were neglecting their duties and behaving themselves most scandalously. This was quite



Near the bank of the river was a little tavern called the "Ferry Inn," and here the weary travellers paused.—Page 30.

terrible, but it was not all. Our young emissary learned that the people of Boston had not been satisfied with the repeal of the Stamp Act, and that great men had come to the front, and were talking about liberty saying that all men were born equal and many other wicked and ungrateful things. He learned about one man in America, James Otis, who had a foolish notion that people were not called upon to obey laws which they had no voice in making, and worst of all, his new acquaintance confided to him many little things that the dangerous Benjamin Franklin had published in his newspaper, and how he had printed right on the front page, like an "extra," the treasonable words addressed to the colonies:

"UNITE OR DIE!"

He learned also that England was trying to keep all this quiet; was trying to keep the skeleton in the closet, as we say now, in the hope that the clouds would clear away and the colonies repent

their wicked conduct, and go on being taxed with cheerful and loyal hearts. All these things did young deKalb communicate to his official master in Paris, and the official master could scarcely contain himself for joy. He at once directed the young man to proceed to America, and continue his investigations there with great caution and secrecy. He was instructed to personally inspect the condition of the country, its harbors, ships, land forces, resources, weapons, and indeed everything which could be of any use in case of war. He was further instructed to ascertain how the colonists felt toward France, and whether they might accept a little military help if it were offered in the right way. So our young hero set sail upon his delicate official errand, and after a long and stormy voyage, landed in Philadelphia on the 12th of January, 1768, where he soon had occasion to open his eyes very wide at the amazing condition of things which he saw.

CHAPTER IV.

A COLONIAL JOURNEY.



WHEN young de-Kalb was in Amsterdam, he had heard that the unjust and cruel Stamp Act had been generously repealed by the mother country, as a voluntary concession to the thirteen colonies. But he now became acquainted with the interesting fact that England had yielded in this particular not because she wanted to, but because she had been forced to. And there is no credit in doing a thing because one has to. It turned out that the people of Boston had refused to pay any duties on goods which they had not ordered, and

had cast a few British cargoes into the ocean. More than this, he saw that the thirteen colonies were joining hands and holding indignation meetings and organizing regiments and establishing provincial congresses, and that the British regulars were unable to stop these things. When he inquired what all these things meant, the good people only smiled and said that there was no need for worry; that they loved Great Britain, and were going to stand by her. But they loved her in a very peculiar way, and young deKalb formed this conclusion before he had lived among them very long.

Suddenly a man in Boston, one Samuel Adams, came forward with the startling announcement that he believed the colonies ought to wash their hands of the British Government altogether, declare independence, defy King George, and start a brand new station. That was a terribly wicked thing to say—awful! Yet it was exactly what everybody thought, and what our young ambassador suspected. From that time on, Samuel

Adams, (who, if you believe it, was a Quaker!) continued to send off these treasonable sky-rockets until others began to do the same thing, and the air was filled with patriotic utterances, some of which have been handed down through all the years, and are dear to the American heart now.

All this news was sent by letter to the Duke of Choiseul, who showed it to the French king, who forthwith became so exceedingly happy that he scarcely knew what to do.

Before very long, our traveller left Philadelphia for New York, which is a pleasant journey of one hour and fifty minutes in these busy times, but which was such a difficult and serious undertaking then that at the end of three days of hard travelling in the rattling old stage coach they had only reached Trenton, the present capital of New Jersey, which is not half way. Here the broad Delaware River, thick with cakes of ice, stretched before the little party with whom deKalb was travelling. The night was dark and not a star in

all the broad expanse of sky above them could be seen. The wind blew furiously, and the night was icy cold. Near the bank of the river was a little tavern called the "Ferry Inn," and here the weary travellers paused. It was a cozy place, to be sure, for tired wayfarers on such a night. The blaze in the chimney danced merrily, reflecting its brightness on the worn but spotless floor. Goodly mugs and steins of pewter stood about on shelves and a shuttle board,—that famous friend of idle hours in those good old days, was ready for their entertainment. The many little square panes of glass rattled in their loose frames in the window, as if they intended to come tumbling out any minute in obedience to the gale. The host, in his hose and knickerbockers, and wearing a spotless apron, received them with great warmth, and they sat about the fireside a while, and listened to the talk of an old man, who had been rehearsing stories of his youth to the genial proprietor.

“It was just such a night a this,” said he, “seventy-six years ago that I was born and—”

“And he remembers it well,” interrupted the host, with a great laugh.

“No, I don’t remember it,” smiled the old man, “but I remember how the parson told me when I grew a little, how he had rode through the woods that night to my father’s house, to pray for my soul before it was an hour old, and I remember how I had to learn to say, ‘God bless our gracious sovereign, William, Prince of Orange and his gracious queen!’ That night the parson heard a sound in those woods which set his nerves in a shudder. It was the wife of Goodman Proctor, who had turned witch, and was shrieking above the tree tops, and shaking bits of snow down upon the parson’s doublet, and calling to him, and trying to win him over to the devil.”

“You do not say ‘God bless the King!’ now,” observed young deKalb.

“No,” replied the old man, “We’ve grown since



A rickety old chaise cart could be seen coming toward us, drawn by a wild-looking bay horse.—Page 35.

then, and William of Orange was a different sort of king than George the Third. They're talking of independence now. When I was a boy a man would hang for it as quick as they'd hang a witch, which they hung twenty of hereabouts."

Then there was a pause.

"Do you think the river might be crossed tonight?" asked young deKalb, of the host. The proprietor walked to the window, and washed away the melting frost with his sleeve, and glanced outside.

"It's a blustering night," he replied, "but that would not keep me if I was set on my journey's end. Nobody has crossed tonight that I can remember except Peter Rugg, and he did not stop here."

"Did he go alone?" inquired young deKalb. At this there was a hearty laugh, and the old man raised his head and said,

"No," he never goes alone; he had his little boy with him. He's a great traveller. Wait a

little till the wind dies down as it may do, and our friend here will tell you the story of Peter Rugg while you rest, for all travellers should know him; they'll meet him soon or late if they travel long enough; eh, William!" and he poked the old man very knowingly in his aged ribs.

"Tell us the tale, then," said young deKalb, "for I'm something of a traveller myself, and have been about in many lands."

So they all gathered closer about the fire, and the old man recounted the strange tale which I do not pretend to explain, but simply record faithfully, while our young hero and his friends are waiting for the hurricane to subside.



CHAPTER V

THE STRANGE STORY OF PETER RUGG.



I WAS once on a journey from Boston to New York about twenty years ago," began the old man, "when a heavy rain commenced to fall which beat into the coach and

wet me and chilled me through. It was a dark night like this one, and we were passing through the Connecticut country. A Boston merchant was by my side, and we discoursed agreeably despite the heavy rain, for there was nothing to do but put a good face to it. Suddenly, we heard a fearful rattling in the distance, and in a moment a rickety old chaise cart could be seen coming toward us, drawn by a wild-look-

ing bay horse. As it neared our stage, we could see that it contained a little, shrivelled up old man whose face was a network of wrinkles, and who had a very anxious and excited look in his eyes. Beside him was a little round faced boy, wrapped up in a great cloak, and blinking from the rain which was dripping into his eyes from his wet hair, and beating into his face with the driving wind.

“ ‘Pray, sir, said the old man, ‘can you point me the way to Boston?’”

“ ‘Boston is thirty miles ahead of you,’ I replied

“ ‘How can you deceive me so! said the old man, ‘Are we not now approaching Salem?’”

“ ‘Salem is in the other direction,’ I replied.

“ ‘It is above Boston; you must pass through Boston to get to Salem.’”

“The old man looked perplexed; “ ‘Then I shall not reach Boston tonight,’ said he, sadly, and whipping up his horse, he drove on. The weather now became frightful, and the wind beat more furiously than before. Black clouds gathered in the

sky and the rolling mumblings of the thunder could be heard until the day broke.

“When we reached New York, I stopped at the King’s Arms Tavern, and happened to tell the occurrence of the old man to a party of men who were gathered there.

“‘I make no doubt,’ said one of them, ‘that it was Peter Rugg on his way home.’

“‘And who may Peter Rugg be?’ said I.

“‘Why,’ said my friend, ‘that I know no more than you except that he is on his way home to Boston, and has been travelling there these twenty years, and never reached it. It is always raining when you meet him; the storm seems to follow him everywhere.’

“After transacting my business in New York, I set upon my journey home in the Boston coach, and sat outside, the weather being raw, but clear, and conversed with a tithing man who had been in Mr. Mather’s church. In our conversation, I related to him the incident of the old man, and he

informed me that many travellers had encountered him with his little boy, and that he always travelled in a storm. I thought the tale a remarkable one, but forgot it in more important things, until not long after, I was at a tavern in Newburyport, above Boston, when it came on to rain heavily at night, and blew so that the shutters banged back and forth and limbs broke from the trees. As I was looking from the window, watching the storm, a rattling chaise cart came dashing along the road and drew up at the door. I went from the house to where the panting horse stood and beheld the veritable old man that I had seen on my journey to New York, and by his side, the little boy whose face looked out from the great cloak that covered his head, like the moon from a dark sky.

“ ‘Pray, sir,’ said the old man, in a very cracked voice, ‘will you be so good as to direct me to Boston, as I have lost my bearings in the storm; I have journeyed along this road since afternoon.’

“ ‘If that be the case,’ quoth I, ‘you have come

right through Boston; you are travelling north now, and leaving Boston far in the distance.'

"'Impossible!' said the old man, scratching his head, 'that could not have happened.'

"'You probably drove through the town without noticing it,' I suggested; 'it is a dark night.'

The old man thought. 'It is very discouraging said he, 'very discouraging, for time is precious,' and the weather very bad.'

"'Will you not stop, said I, 'till the storm subsides?'

"'No,' he replied, 'I have not a moment to lose,' and turning his horse about, he gave the animal a smart crack with his whip, and went dashing back in the direction from which he had come. After he had gone, the rain ceased to fall, and the stars came out, and the wind died down, so that the night was very fair.

"I was now much concerned over this strange traveller, who haunted the roads and carried wind and rain with him, and told the story inside the



He heard the public utterances of the famous patriots, and talked with them without revealing his identity or his mission.—P. 62.

tavern where it excited much comment from those who had heard of the strange driver and his little child. One man, who had been toll-keeper at a bridge near Boston, related that the mysterious traveller had often passed his gate at night and never stopped to pay the toll, so intent was he on reaching his destination, which he never seemed to do though he often passed right through it in his flight, with the wind and rain playing behind him as he sped along.

“Another fellow—a roistering rogue, who made a custom of staying about the inn, related how he had once been at a tavern not far from Hartford, on a pleasant evening, when it came up suddenly to rain in torrents; how he noticed that the crooked lightning which played about in the sky once made the letters, P. R., and how in a few moments afterwards, the old man in his rickety chaise came dashing along with a wild look in his eyes and urging his horse on as if his soul’s life depended on it. Thinking to stop him, the fellow seized a large

saddle which hung on the door post, and hurled it smartly at the flying driver, but it took no effect, as my friend informed me that it passed straight through the body of old Peter, without jarring him at all, and that the saddle still may be seen lying on the opposite side of the road to the tavern, for no one has dared to lay hands to it from that day to this, believing it to be bewitched.

“Another man, the keeper of the tavern, seemed not to be much stirred at all this, for he had directed the storm-breeding traveller, as he was called, many times, and believed him to be real flesh and blood, though he could offer no solution to the endless journey which the strange pair had been making through all the New England country. On one occasion, he said, after a certain fair summer day, the sky had suddenly become threatening and a fearful storm had burst as night came on, when shortly, Peter Rugg with his chaise and little boy, came dashing along the road, and inquired wheth-

er he was not in Boston, and where he could find Middle Street.

“On hearing this, I resolved to visit Middle Street when I should next have occasion to be in that way, and inquire for the mysterious Peter among the dwellers there. So I visited a Mrs. Dyer in that neighborhood, and learned that a man named Rugg had lived hard by her a score of years before, who had the habit of swearing terribly when he was angered, though otherwise a very virtuous man. She further said that when he lost his temper, no power could control him, and that he was often seen to turn somersaults in his rage, thereby swearing in a circle—a novel method, never in use before—and that the atmosphere from his denunciations and threats frequently became so thick that it was necessary to open the windows so that his wrath might be the better ventilated. However true or false this may be, her husband, who was a deacon in the South Church, informed me that Peter’s hat was often seen to

rise high above his wig, sometimes to the extent of fifteen inches, driven by the force and magnitude of his oaths.

“On one occasion, so Mrs. Dyer informed me, Peter Rugg had driven with his little boy, to Concord for some feed, when a fearful storm arose and he stopped at a farmer’s house on the way back, where he was urged to remain over night, for the sake of the little boy who might take cold, being in an open wagon in the midst of such a storm. She related how the farmer’s wife had given out that Peter Rugg had brought his clinched fist down on the table cursing the rain, and saying that he would drive home that very night, *or he would never drive home*; and that he forthwith, turned three somersaults in the air, and danced such a jig that the glass fell out of the window.

“And the rain-storm took old Peter at his word, for he has been travelling the country from that

day to this, always followed by a mocking storm, and never reaching home.

“His wife waited in vain for many years, and then died in good old age, and was buried in Mr. Mather’s Church. The little boy has never grown an inch and never had anything to eat, as far as people know.

“I cannot certify the truth of Mrs. Dyer’s tale, but this I can say with right good certainty that no honest inn keeper will contradict it; that Peter Rugg is still travelling about the country, inquiring the way to Boston, with his two attendants, the rain and his little boy, and that he passed through here this very night, scarce an hour ago.”



CHAPTER VI

SEEING NEW YORK.



“**T**HAT is the most remarkable piece of information I have ever heard,” said young Baron deKalb. “I expect to visit Boston before many days, and I shall investigate these strange facts personally while there.”

Whether he ever found time to do so, I cannot say, but when he reached his home, he related the singular story to his wife, who had no explanation to give except that America was a queer place, and that ever since the days of Hendrick Hudson very extraordinary things has been occurring there.

For my part, I am inclined to doubt some few

points in the tale. The incident of the little boy never growing up in twenty years is rather a suspicious circumstance, and the fact that he never caught cold in all that time is a little odd. There is one thing, however, which recommends the story very strongly, and that is the part played by the rain-storm. Of this I can only say that if nature would but make it her constant practice to take men at their word on all occasions, it would be an excellent thing for the world in general.

Before long the wind died down a little, and the party decided to cross the stream with their coach and horses on a high raft, and proceed on the journey toward New York. There were five men and four horses to go, and it was not without regret that the little party of travellers left the cozy tavern with its crackling wood fire and enlivening talk, and wrapping their cloaks about them, made their way to the makeshift craft which was to bear them across the river.

It soon transpired that though the wind experienced a sinking spell, it had not by any means died, for it rose up again with increased vigor and by the time the voyagers were in mid stream, it howled around them with relentless fury. Before long, the helpless craft was driven with awful force upon a little rocky island in the middle of the broad river. The horses were drowned and all the baggage and provisions lost. The little party climbed up on the rocky island, and mingled their voices in a lusty call for help, which they hoped might be heard on shore. But the moaning of the wind drowned their calls. Again and again, they cried aloud, but the wild and merciless hurricane only mocked their feeble efforts. They could see the flickering lights of the distant tavern, small but cheerful, through the heavy snow which now began to fall, and blow into drifts around them. Huddled together on those bleak rocks, they beat their arms and moved their feet to keep from freezing. All night long,

GENERAL (BARON) DEKALB

they waited thus as the hours wore away, until when morning came, two of the number had died and the rest were found unconscious and benumbed in the thick snow, and taken to the shore, where they were cared for at a neighboring house until they were able to proceed on their journey.

In New York, the young Baron noted the conditions with a keen eye. There were many Germans there, and his visit was filled with interest and pleasure. The feeling of the colonists was hard to understand. They were all looking forward to independence, but were not just then prepared to go to war. The young agent seemed to have eyes in the back of his head. He saw things which the average foreigner would never have noticed. He did nothing but look and listen and ask questions and communicate his opinions and discoveries to the Duke in France.

He saw that the people of New York were prosperous and independent, and that they entertained some very novel opinions on the question

of government. He visited Kings' College, now Columbia, and saw that young men were being educated there, and that the infant seat of learning was sending forth its scholars and thinkers to promulgate the conviction, so strange to foreign ears, that all men are created equal. He visited the public houses where the *Sons of Liberty* were wont to gather, and heard the British Parliament denounced in many a mug of sizzling flip. He saw the matron and the maid, as well as the staid but patriotic spinster, abstaining from the delectation so temptingly presented in the fragrant cup of tea, because that article was subject to exorbitant taxation. He saw the good citizens making sacrifices on every hand for the sake of principle and example. He saw them going without imported goods—their patriotic wives and daughters giving up the fashions and furbelows of worldly London and appearing in homespun. He perceived the fair damsels at the critical period of sweet sixteen, when enticing

raiment was most of all to be desired, shorn of all their treasured and cherished fineries; the jeweled earring, the beruffled petticoat, the silken love-hood, the bewitching stomacher; of everything engaging and alluring except their graceful courtesies, and those were not imported. Truly, these sacrifices constituted a noble martyrdom indeed, and were a glorious illustration to the French ambassador, of the patriotic feeling which pervaded the entire colony.



CHAPTER VII

NEWS ARRIVES



ONE afternoon, our secret agent bent his steps in the direction of the *Province Arms Tavern* to secure his transportation to Boston. There was no coach line between the two towns at that early date,

so that it was customary for travellers to accompany the post-boy on horse-back, and this official custodian of the Colonial mail was very frequently the leader of a motley equestrian procession as he made his way between the Puritan capital and the Dutch metropolis. Ah, how many a love letter, breathing tender

hopes through its decorous phrase, languished in the doublet of the ever welcome post boy, or perchance beneath his pillion as he urged his tired steed through the sombre forests of New England on his all important errand; and ah, how many pensive maidens gathered in the place of his arrival and watched with wistful countenances the distribution of the packages and missives which had been entrusted to him as he passed from village to village on his perilous journey of a week. And thrice envied was the proud landlord at whose inn the post boy made his station.

The landlord of the *Province Arms* was standing upon his doorstep clad in a white apron and a spacious smile which effectually set off the upper and lower ends of his capacious form. The fields and trees about the hostelry had thrown off their garments of winter, and, faithful to the universal fashion of the season, had decked them-

selves in abundant green. The weather was mild and pleasant. Beneath the stately trees sat little groups of men talking and smoking over their mugs of cider which were replenished at intervals by a dextrous little boy, who went dancing in and out of the door with a tray cunningly balanced on either hand. Now and then a merry laugh would fill the air. The drowsy smoke from pipes curled idly up through the leaves above, making its aimless journey in the summer air and dissolving into nothing. Several horses were tied to the trees below and grazed contentedly on the unkept lawn. The scene was one of peacefulness.

Mine host, Master Burns, was contemplating his array of guests, his hands planted upon his hips and his eyes contracted into a squint, for the sun dazzled them, and he was trying to locate a particular figure among the several groups. Finally he called, and one of them turning, said, "What now?"

“I say is there any sign of the boy?” replied Master Burns.

“No.”

“He’s a day past due.”

“Maybe he’s kept in Hartford.”

“He doesn’t wait in Hartford,” replied the host. “More like he’s kept in Boston by Gage’s troops. Here’s a score of people waiting about to go back with him and the horses to be fed and kept.”

“My good man,” said the Baron de Kalb approaching the porch, “I want to add another one to that score of travellers, for I’m going to Boston by the next post.”

“Lord bless me,” quoth the host, “Boston’s like a kettle boiling over now, and every one as can is keeping away from there. I doubt they’ve kept the boy himself there to go through his letters and packets to spy out rebel plots as they call ’em.”

“Did I hear you say that General Gage’s troops were in Boston?” said de Kalb.

“Yes, to be sure,” returned the host, “they’re quartered on the common, for they can’t get lodgings in the town. Boston’s in a high state; why do you go there?”

By this time, several loiterers and one or two lazy looking indians and negroes had gathered about the baron and were eyeing him as if he were a very suspicious personage.

“Still, I must go to Boston,” he insisted, “and I want to go by the next post, if may be.”

“Well, then,” said the host, “there’s a horse in this stable you can have, and you’ll have to pay half in advance now which is one pound o’ His Majesty’s money, and turn the horse over to Mr. Winslow when you get to the King Arms in Boston, which you’ll be responsible for him until he’s turned over safe; but don’t turn him over until Mr. Winslow gives you one pound which you’ll give the boy to bring here; and may yer make yer

stay there safe without being shot for a rebel.”

This last apprehensive greeting was not at all encouraging to our foreign agent but he soon forgot the dangers of his projected sojourn in a cold fowl and a bottle of sack which mine host supplied and in the edifying conversation which accompanied the refreshment as a sort of verbal sauce. For when the baron had seated himself before the regaling fare in the long spotless room of the Province Arms, Master Burns confided to his unknown guest many facts which he had learned from the distinguished worthies who were wont to hold their meetings at his house and discuss Colonial affairs and cogitate on the oppressive actions of Great Britain.

Before long, however, the hangers on about the place could be seen through the window to be leaving their comfortable seats, and other faces could be seen outside, and all seemed excited and in great expectation. Men and women without hat or headdress, and scantily clothed, came rush-

ing over the lawn, quite breathless, and gathered into little groups about the door. Children came bounding from the road and calling, "He is here, he is here!" at the top of their voices, careered about the porch as if they were on springs. Yells and shouts could be heard in the distance, until a great cloud of dust came rolling up the highway and out of it, as from a magician's hat, a horse and rider dashed from the road and up the spacious lawn. And there stood the belated post-boy, dusty and travel-stained, the observed of all observers, taking off his hat in a very ostentatious manner, and basking in all his local glory and popularity.

"The governor has ordered the Assembly to adjourn and threatened 'em with Gage's troops!" he called, when he had gained his breath. Then he threw his large bag, with its precious contents, straight at Master Burns' head, and there was a great scramble for it by the few who were standing near the landlord.

“Then things have come to a fine pass!” thundered Master Burns,” and I agree with Mr. Adams that the time has come to strike.”

“It’s an outrage,” cried one woman, “and the King’s a tyrant, and the governor in Boston is a villain and a coward and a despot. What did the men of the Assembly do when they adjourned?”

“What did they do when they adjourned?” roared the post-boy, dismounting and stretching himself. “Did yer hear that; what did they do when they adjourned! Why they didn’t adjourn; they just kept right on sitting and passing resolutions to raise troops—and they’re sitting yet—the Lord bless ’em!”

And then there was a lusty shout from everybody present, and the Baron de Kalb thought it was high time for him to visit the New England storm centre and congratulated himself right heartily that he had engaged a horse.

CHAPTER VIII

WICKED BOSTON



HE found Boston, the most disobedient and unruly city in the colonies. There the good people told him how they loved the mother country; how nothing could separate

them; and when they winked, and the baron notified the Duke of Choiseul of these winks and the Duke notified the king—for a wink means a great deal in France even now, and had a great political significance in good old colonial Boston.

The baron noticed that there was a very respectable collection of military stores in Concord



The little French Marquis and the gigantic German Baron strode into Philadelphia.—Page 72.

He heard the public utterances of the famous patriots, and talked with them without revealing his identity or his mission. He made up his mind that war between England and her American possessions was inevitable, and that when the wrath of the colonists broke forth unrestrained, the spectacle of righteous indignation would be terrible but glorious to behold. He saw that England was getting to the end of her rope; that the limit of colonial patience was nearly reached, and that when this patience was exhausted, there would be an explosion. All this, he communicated to his superiors abroad, who were exceedingly tickled at the state of affairs and began to cogitate on many plans.

But just now a very serious piece of information came to our young friend. He learned that his letters to France were being opened by the British authorities in the colonial post office. Every one which the Duke of Choiseul had re-

ceived bore a broken seal. Ah, to what depths will men and even nations sink when haunted by secret apprehension and by silent fears! The young baron discontinued sending letters to his masters, resolved to complete his tour as quickly as he could, and sail for home. Having become an object of suspicion he could scarcely hope to accomplish more for he knew not who were enemies and who were friends, nor how much false and misleading information might be put in his way. Nor did he need to inquire further than he had done already. He knew that the little settlements of the western world were coming to be a mighty power; mighty in wealth and resources; mighty in their vast expanse of fertile country; mighty in the virtues which their stern and useful lives had implanted in them; mighty in the bonds which were drawing them together and forming them into a central government. It was the grandest spectacle of history, and it inspired young deKalb. He went home full of admiration for the new land; thrilled with

the spirit of liberty and justice that pervaded it, and he sang the praises of America to the King of France. He told the Duke of Choiseul that the thirteen colonies were travelling headlong toward their destiny. He prophesied that England would soon lose every inch of territory which she then possessed in North America, and thousands of men, and millions of pounds sterling besides.

And then the King of France could not contain himself, but laughed right merrily, and all his ministers and courtiers, like the faithful subjects that they were, laughed too, for it was a great joke to be sure.



CHAPTER IX

THE BARON LOSES HIS POSITION



THE French Government was now resolved to aid the colonial rebellion whenever it should break forth. The cautious Duke of Choiseul did not care to anticipate nor hasten the event how-

ever, but preferred to wait patiently, and let the quarrel of England with her colonies take its course. You may wonder why the government of France was so interested in American affairs, and so apparently anxious that the colonies should rebel against their political mother across the sea. It is important, therefore, for you to know what probably you have already discerned,

that it was not a generous, patriotic impulse which impelled the King of France and his shrewd minister, but merely a feeling of national spite against their rival which induced them to seek, in the thirteen colonies, an avenue which might lead to sweet revenge. But you must not suppose that this unworthy feeling prompted our hero and his loyal friend, young Lafayette, to fight in the cause of colonial independence. For when they came, they came as private citizens and volunteers. And this is why their names are reverently inscribed in American history.

It now transpired that as the Duke of Choiseul had no further use for our friend, deKalb, the ambassador was thrown out of employment, for the great duke could see no use for extending any courtesies or favors to a faithful servant for past services. So the baron was politely told that he "was through," as they say in courteous

New England, when employees are discharged, and he proceeded to his home. He soon purchased a new estate, with spacious gardens, and winding gravel paths, and settled down again to live a tranquil life with his wife and children among these pleasant scenes. Here, under the spreading blossom laden trees, he might be seen by passers by, seated on some rustic bench, or rambling among the favorite haunts in his large park. Perhaps amid these pleasant surroundings, he recounted to his wide-eyed little listeners, some of the mysterious legends which he had heard on the far off shores of America, where witches and goblins were supposed to inhabit the dark forests and lonely shores. However, this may be, the months and years wore on, and brought with them the important events which they had foretold. While our hero was leading this peaceful happy life among the fair surroundings of his beautiful home, amid the birds and flowers, with his loving wife and children to fill

his days with quiet and contentment, Louis the Fifteenth was cutting high capers in his royal palace at Versailles. He was so busily engaged in enjoying himself that he lost his head completely and forgot all about his duties as the King of France. In the whirl of merry dances, his royal crown fell off, and finally, becoming exhausted, he lay down and died, this being the first important and serious thing he had been known to do in seven years. Of course, he had forgotten all about America and his foreign policy, and such tedious details, but the Duke of Choiseul had kept his keen eye fixed on the turbulent colonies across the ocean.

It befell now that Louis the sixteenth became King, who, after a rather troublous reign, lost his head in an entirely different manner than his predecessor, for he was guillotined in the French Revolution. He revived, however, the interest of his government in colonial affairs, and the intention to render aid to the oppressed subjects



He suffered with the starving Continental army in its bleak and snow-bound huts at Valley Forge.—Page 75.

of Great Britain, if a favorable occasion should present itself.

In 1775, the thirteen colonies rose up in their wrath, from under the foot of British tyranny, and defied King George the Third.

Then came the skirmishes at Concord and Lexington, the battle of Bunker Hill, the siege of Boston and the disastrous efforts of the patriots to conquer Canada.

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence shook the world and the thirteen colonies came forward on the great stage as an independent nation.

But before this the Baron deKalb had left his home to join the fight against Great Britain. He had made the acquaintance of the Marquis-de-Lafayette, and they had resolved to sail for America together and offer their services to the Continental Army. So while the high dignitaries of France were unrolling great balls of red tape in their solemn council chamber, and making res-

olutions and unmaking them, and while His Royal Majesty was considering how much France could gain by a treaty of alliance with America, these two noble men of action buckled on their swords, and left their homes to join the patriots who were battling against the most powerful nation on the globe.

The Marquis de Lafayette was young and dashing, filled with enthusiasm and the spirit of liberty. The Baron deKalb was older, more thoughtful, more experienced, and with a scientific military training which the cruel Seven Years' War had furnished him, and such as no American general at the time possessed. His frame was enormous and his fierce eyes looked out from under his heavy forehead and dark lashes like the eyes of an eagle. His lips closed as firmly as the jaws of a steel vice. His presence was august and terrible. He was taller than General Washington himself, and his haughty mien and soldierly presence gave him the appearance of

some ancient gladiator or fabled giant. His look was indeed formidable enough, one might suppose, to frighten away an entire army.

In the month of September, these two men, the little French marquis, and the gigantic German baron, strode into Philadelphia, the colonial capital, where the Continental Congress was in session. That patriotic body was then in much perplexity over the distribution of military commissions. For America had never conducted a regular international war before; it was something entirely novel, and everybody wanted to be a general. Applications were pouring in from all sides like answers to an advertisement, and it began to look as if there would be no ordinary soldiers in the army, so anxious were the good men of the day to be its leaders. They did not seem to realize the truth of Mr. Gilbert's saying, that, "when everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody," and they clamored about the doors of

old Independence Hall for military ranks and titles.

In this predicament the Congress found it rather difficult to give appropriate military rank to distinguished foreigners. If they had thought twice before appointing Gates and Lee as major generals, the cause of independence would have been far better off, but they chose to honor these two unscrupulous Englishmen and to slight the brave and generous volunteers who had just arrived from France. Lafayette, therefore, being a young man of fortune, volunteered to serve without pay, and attached himself to the commander-in-chief, who also received no money for his glorious services, and their names are henceforth associated with each other throughout the war. Before long the wise men of Congress and even the continental generals became convinced that they could not afford to let a soldier like deKalb slip through their hands, for he had a military education such as none of them

could claim, and they forthwith tendered to him a commission as Major General in the Continental Army, and by this title he is known to us as one of the bravest and most loyal and efficient soldiers that ever fought under our beloved flag.



CHAPTER X

SIR HENRY CLINTON MAKES PLANS



THE story of our hero from this point on, would be, in truth, a history of the remaining years of the old war. He soon became a great admirer of Washington, and sang the

praises of the commander-in-chief in all his letters home. His advice was sought and followed by the chief and by the other generals in every important move. He fought in those fierce and fruitless battles which were waged to prevent the British troops from entering Philadelphia, and he suffered with the starving Continental army in its bleak and snow bound huts at Valley

Forge. He found that fighting in America was a very different thing from leading the well-trained regiments which were arrayed against Frederick of Prussia in the Seven Years' War.

It was then the dark period of the War for Independence, when failure and defeat and poverty and suffering had filled the land with gloom. The prospect, so bright at first, had faded into deep despair. There was no money with which to carry on the war; ammunition was scarce and provisions almost gone. In the midst of these discouraging conditions, news arrived that France had made up her mind at last, to give the colonies a lift by sending a splendid fleet to be placed at their disposal.

It was then that Sir Henry Clinton, the British commander, decided to direct his attentions to the South where no important battles had been fought, and to end the war, if possible, by conquering the Southern colonies. For while the Americans had not accomplished much in the

neighborhood of New York, nor ousted the proud baronet from his pleasant quarters there, still Sir Henry's army had very little to show for all their running about in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and on the whole His Excellency thought that it would be wise to press the war more vigorously in the South, where a diversion under Lord Cornwallis was encamped.

In May, 1780 Charleston, South Carolina, was surrendered to the British after a bitter siege, and all the continental soldiers in that city became prisoners of war. It was a great victory for the British army and a terrible disaster to the patriots. South Carolina was invaded from every quarter by reinforcements of the enemy. The inhabitants were forced to join the British army or to flee the country. Their homes were burned or pillaged, and every cruelty and outrage was perpetrated by the army of King George the Third. Families were separated; women and children were murdered; men were placed on prison ships,

where they were chained in dungeons and allowed to starve. Sir Henry Clinton had proceeded South to superintend these things in person, and was able to steal for himself and his officers as much as a million dollars from the innocent people. Finally, Sir Henry, with a large part of his victorious army, started for New York, leaving Lord Cornwallis in the South. While he was pressing his way northward, here the Baron deKalb, with a large force, was on his way toward Charleston to reinforce the suffering inhabitants. As he pressed through Virginia, scores of patriots joined the ranks until the Baron's troops had swelled into a splendid army. The legion which he led forth from New York, grew larger and larger, liking a rolling snow ball, as it proceeded on its march of rescue. The Baron did not know that Charleston had fallen, and he hoped to reach the scene in time to save the city. But before he had crossed the southern boundary of Virginia, he heard the alarming news. And from the north,

came tidings still more unfortunate, as he, in his heart, well knew—the news that General Horatio Gates, the victor of Saratoga and the conqueror of Burgoyne, still in the flush and glory of his recent triumphs in the north, had been appointed commander-in-chief of all the southern forces, and was on his way to take command.

If the Baron deKalb had been allowed to proceed as the commander of the Southern Army, the sad events which I must now relate would never have occurred. Gates was a vainglorious and jealous man, without patriotism and without honor. His head was turned by his good luck and he fancied himself a great deliverer, wiser even than General Washington, whom he tried in every way to supersede.

DeKalb was ordered to proceed into North Carolina, and there await the arrival of his chief.

CHAPTER XI

GEN. GATES CHANGES HIS MIND



THE Continental Congress thought that General Gates was a very extraordinary man. He was allowed to report his plans and movements directly to that body, and not to General Washington, as was the custom of the other generals. Such a wonderful impression had he made by his extravagant talk and pompous claims that there had been a secret scheme put forth to make him the commander-in-chief of all the Continental forces. It failed because there were a few great men in Congress wise enough to know that his pretensions were a sham; that he was neither pa-

triotic enough nor honest enough, nor brave enough to bring the war to a successful close. But he was a great favorite with a few who had been dazzled by his imposing presence, and by the influence of these he had been appointed to conduct with full authority the southern campaign.

After a long and weary march, attended by much suffering and hunger, the troops of Baron deKalb encamped at Wilcox Mills, on the banks of Deep River, where, before long, the high and mighty Gates arrived with a great flourish. The Baron deKalb received him with a salute of thirteen guns, and all the honors which the new commander's rank, and his arrogant nature, seemed to require. The august warrior from the North then assumed command with great pomp, and the Baron deKalb took charge of a small division.

It is said, indeed, that ~~the~~ the starving Southern Army, so much in need of military skill and calm and thoughtful judgment, so much in need of honest leadership just then, should have been de-

prived of one of the most scientific and skillful generals that the Congress had employed, and given to a man who acted not from patriotic motives and for his country's good, but simply for display and personal renown. But so it was, and the fearful consequences which ensued are graven in our country's annals as one of the saddest and most needless failures in the grand old war.

After inspecting the troops, General Gates, without consulting any officers, announced that the weak and tired regiments, whom he called his "grand army," should be ready to proceed the following morning to Camden in South Carolina, where the well-drilled British Army was encamped. At this startling order, his officers addressed a letter to him, reminding him of the bleak and barren country they must pass through, of the absence of provisions and ammunition, of all the obstacles which were in the line of march, but their arguments and warnings were of no avail. Gen-

eral Gates believed that as soon as the enemy heard of his approach, the frightened troops would turn in deadly fear and run away to Charleston with all their might and main.

On the following morning, the long and difficult march southward began. Food was scarce and the famishing soldiers were compelled to eat unripened corn and half ripe fruit. Finally, the weary army arrived at Clermont, a few miles above the British camp. The Baron deKalb recommended that the Army be allowed to remain there until better fitted to proceed, but his voice was unheeded.

“Where shall we dine tomorrow?” asked an officer of General Gates.

“Dine, sir,” quoth the proud leader, “why, in the British camp, with Lord Cornwallis as our guest.”

That night, the army, leaving its baggage train behind, filed into line and pressed on silently toward the British camp. The night was clear



After a long and weary march attended by much suffering and hunger, the troops of Baron deKalb encamped at Wilcox Mills.
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and warm, and not a sound could be heard save the drowsy hum of insects, as the Continental Army made its way through the soft and yielding sand. The heat was intense, and many men sank fainting by the way. But the legions under General Gates pressed on.

Meanwhile, Lord Cornwallis with his army was marching northward to attack the colonial forces at Clermont, where he knew that they had paused. His idea was to surprise them at sunrise. A collision of these two armies took place before dawn. In a glade of pine trees about halfway between the two camps, the first pale light of morning found the army of King George the Third brought face to face with the American patriots in line of march. A brisk skirmish took place immediately; there was a panic in the American lines and the foremost regiments gave way. But the light infantry of the colonial army held its own, and drove the British back. And then both armies paused; the smoke died down;

the air was still, as slowly the bright morning sun rose above the horizon and poured its dazzling radiance down upon the waiting legions. The Americans had taken a few prisoners during the skirmish in the dusk, and from these it was learned that Lord Cornwallis himself was at the head of the British troops, and that their numbers were vast. When General Gates learned of this, he was amazed.

“Let a council be called at once,” said he.

The messenger with whom he had spoken and to whom he had given the command, hastened to the Baron deKalb.

“Did not the commanding general at once order a retreat?” asked the Baron. He was told that General Gates was very much surprised, and scarcely *knew* what to do.

“He knows our condition,” said the Baron deKalb. And the messenger departed. Soon the council met in the rear of the American lines.

“You know our situation, gentlemen,” said

General Gates. "What had we better do? The victory does not look so sure."

The Baron deKalb was silent. Twice had he offered a soldier's advice, and twice had it been scornfully rejected. He glared at the commander but said nothing. There was an awkward pause, for every officer felt that General Gates was responsible for the difficulty they were in. And Gates himself was nervous and uncertain.

"What had we better do?" he now repeated.

"Why, we must fight, I suppose," said an officer, "there seems nothing else to do."

"We must fight, then," said General Gates. "Gentlemen, to your posts."



CHAPTER XII

CONGRESS CHANGES ITS OPINION



WHEN the sun had risen well above the distant hills, and the day was fairly on, the fight began. The British veterans made a fearful onslaught and the American regiments of Vir-

ginia and Carolina, unable to stand before the force and numbers of Cornwallis' men, gave way and fled.

"I will bring the rascals back with me into line," shouted General Gates, and leaving his important duties, he galloped after them far to the rear leaving the American regiments to conduct the battle as best they could.

Was he afraid to remain at the front? We do not know; but this we do know; that it was quite a common thing for him to have important business in the rear when firing began.

He did not stop riding until he was sixty miles behind the battle.

And now our hero, the brave deKalb, occupies the center of the stage. Amid the tumult and confusion of an army left without its general, in the heat of battle, the veteran of the Seven Years' War rode boldly to the front and took command. Gathering all the scattered forces about him, he led them bravely to the charge. Always at the front, in the midst of shot and shell, his great figure could be seen encouraging the men and creating wonder and dismay within the British lines. Careless of death, fearless of cannon and bayonet, he fought with a desperation and a gallantry which will be a glory to his splendid name as long as history lasts. Amid the din and roar of that fearful battle, his lusty voice rose up like thunder,

sending forth commands and urging his sturdy followers on to victory. The sword which swung above his head was dripping with blood, His keen eye flashed. Three times was the gallant baron forced back, and three times did he lead the patriots forth again. In one of these assaults his horse was shot down. In another his head was laid open with a British sword. A soldier bound the ugly wound for the fearless general, and he fought on.

Having no horse, he led the next assault on foot. He received eleven wounds, and still he fought. But now, Cornwallis, concentrating all his strength in a final charge, rode forward and the American lines broke before the awful attack. The scene which followed was bloody and terrific. In the midst of it, the Baron deKalb fell bleeding to the ground.

“The rebel general! the rebel general!” shouted the enemy, as they saw him fall, and rushing for-

ward, some British soldiers tried to stab him with their bayonets.

“Spare the Baron deKalb!” called the general’s aide, rushing to where the bleeding hero lay, but his cry sounded on deaf ears. The brutal English soldiers raised the helpless warrior from the ground and standing him against a tree, began to search him. They were holding him up, in this way, and mocking the brave life that was ebbing fast away, when suddenly the crowd broke; the soldiers dropped the dying general to the ground; a dead silence prevailed; and Lord Cornwallis rode up and jumping from his horse, grasped the rebel general by the hand.

“I am glad I have defeated you,” said the British leader, “but I am exceedingly sorry to see you wounded so.”

He then gave orders to have the baron properly cared for, and the wounded patriot was carried from the field. Three days later, on the nineteenth of August, 1780, he died among sorrowing

friends, and even the British officers who had fought against him, sent messages of sympathy and regret into the American camp. Just before he died, the gallant general raised his head, and speaking with much difficulty, asked his faithful adjutant, who was standing near, to thank the brave men who had fought so nobly under his command, and to bid them an affectionate farewell.

The Battle of Camden was a victory for the British, but it was also the end of General Gates with all his pompous claims and lordly bearing. He was held responsible by Congress, as he should have been, for the unwise advance upon the larger and better forces of his adversary, and was suspended from the Continental Army.

Beneath the shadow of a spreading tree near the spot on which the sad and bloody struggle had been waged, far from his native land and his adopted home in France, where wife and children waited his return, the patriot and soldier was laid

to rest towards the close of the glorious War for Independence, and before its end was known.

In the year 1820, when another war with England had been fought and won, the staunch old tree, grand and majestic, standing firm and undaunted in the midst of wind and storm, as *he* had stood before the veteran legions of King George, was the only monument which marked the lonely spot where the illustrious and valiant hero lay. Shortly afterward, however, a stone memorial was begun at Camden, and when the Marquis de Lafayette visited the new republic in 1825, he was asked to lay the corner stone of this grateful tribute which the people of a free country were erecting to the memory of his brave companion and beloved friend.

Perhaps the sorrow and regret which the gallant Frenchman felt at the thought that he would never see again the features of his military brother, were lessened by the knowledge of the glorious work which both of them had done, and a

feeling that if the cause in which the Baron fought were worth living for, then surely it was worth dying for, and that such a death would be for ever a glorious and loving memory in our land. No doubt he felt throughout the solemn ceremony that the noble sacrifice was worth while, and had been gladly made by him whose name and actions they were honoring.

The grand old War for Independence brought much grief and sorrow, with all its grand results, for it meant the saddening of many lowly homes, and the parting forever of many friends. When it ended, some whose arms and voices had been bravely raised for freedom in those seven fearful years, rested, as we know, in quiet graves, and others took themselves to foreign lands from whence they came, to live in peace, or to fight in other wars, as the brave young Lafayette was still destined to do in turbulent and troubled France.

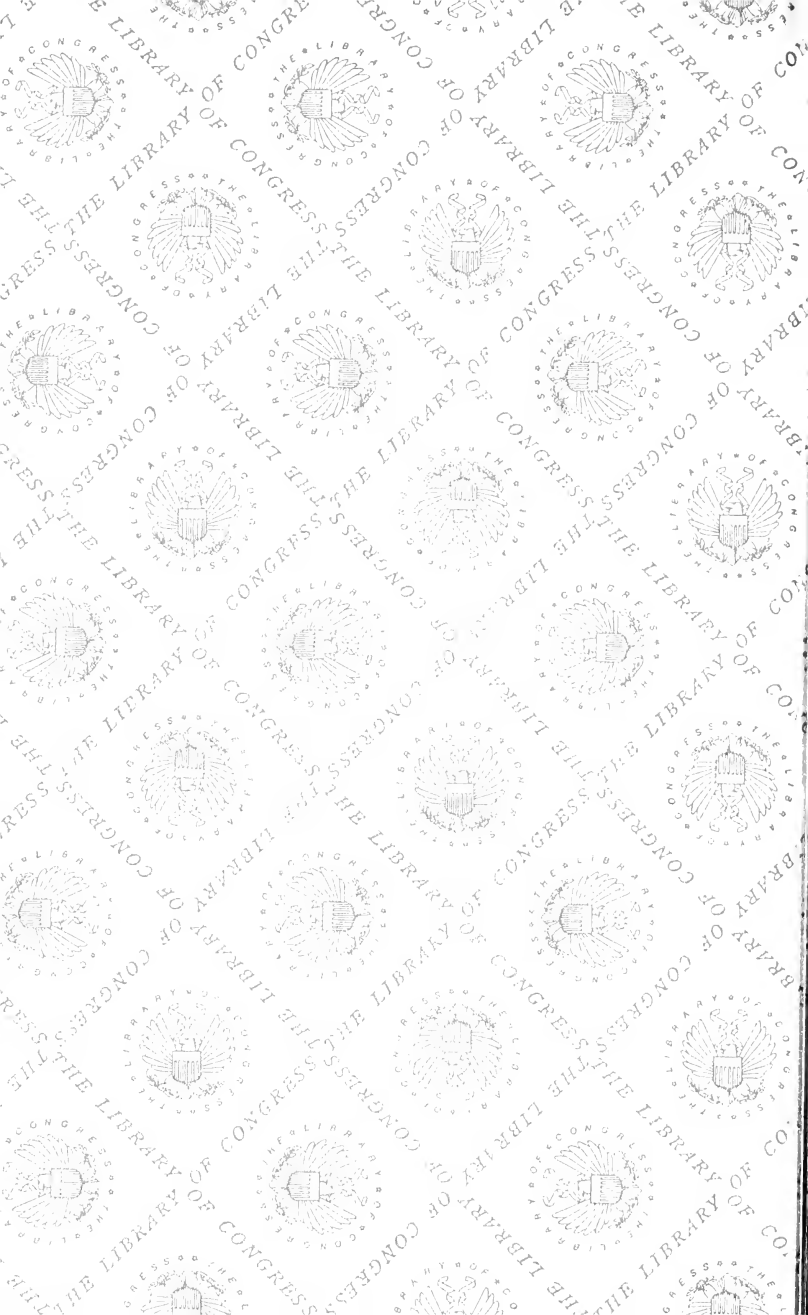
Perhaps, as he took his final leave of all the

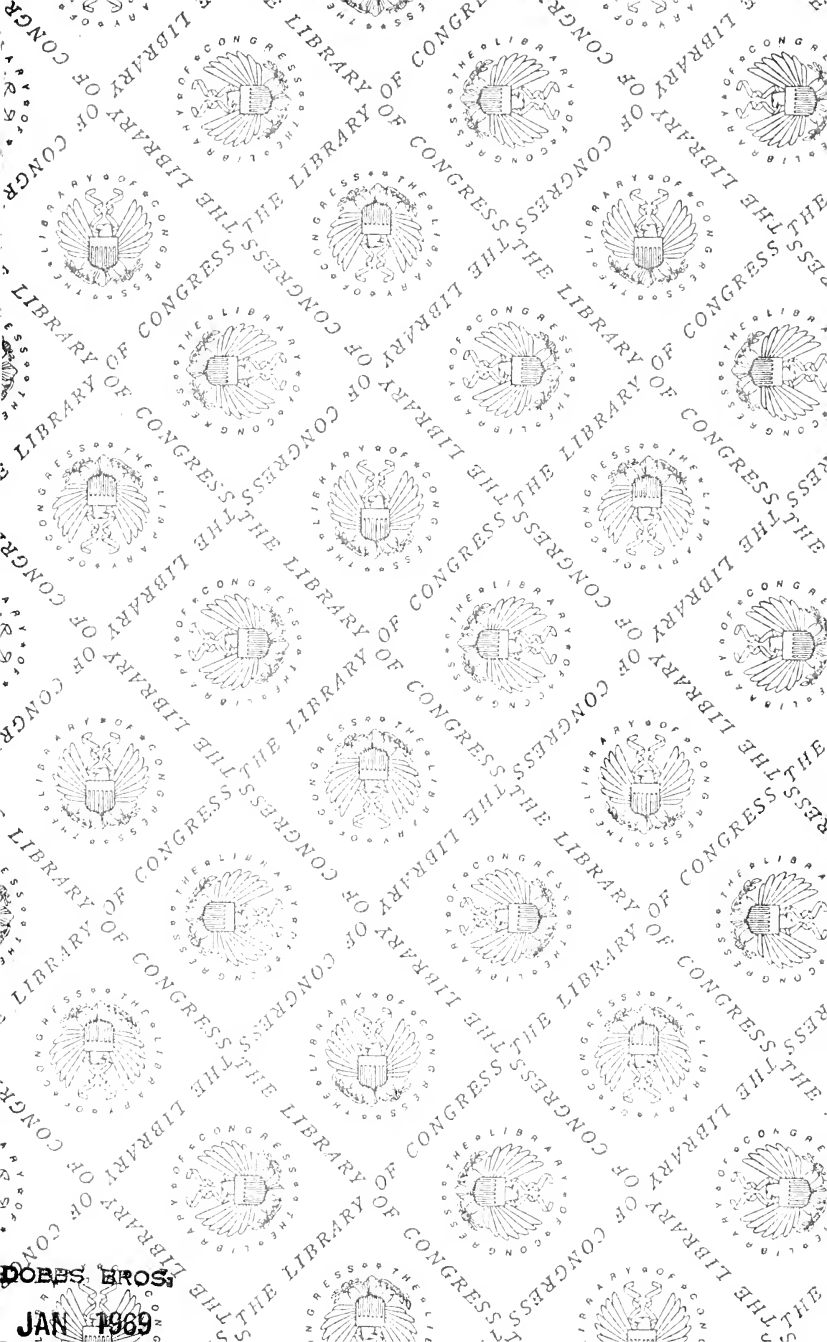
friends whom he had come to know so well and love so dearly in the new land of the free, he felt a secret wish within his heart that the war were not yet closed, that he might have still some small excuse to stay his parting; even as an author feels when he sees the familiar figures, in their quaint old cockade hats and ribboned shoes, with whom he has been mingling, fading in the distance; the glorious fields of ancient battles disappearing in the mist; when he realizes that his last tale is more than told, but lingers still, scarce knowing what to say, but loath to close, and finally takes his pen once more—as a host might stand upon his porch and wave his handkerchief to a departing friend—to take a final leave of his circle of young readers.



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